

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7793

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7238

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SHUM, UK, AR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN DRINAN'S VISIT TO ARGENTINA IN AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION

REF: (A) STATE 271013 (NOTAL), (B) BUENOS AIRES 7218

1. MISS PATRICIA FEENEY OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LONDON STAFF CALLED AT EMBASSY NOV. 3 TO DISCUSS VISIT OF CONG. DRINAN AND LORD AVEBURY. SHE HAD JUST COME FROM MEETING WITH UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE WHO HAD DECLINED TO ASSOCIATE HIS OFFICE WITH AI REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH MIN INTERIOR, MIN JUSTICE, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMISSION (CAL), HUMAN RIGHTS STAFF OF FON MINISTRY, ETC.

2. MISS FEENEY ASKED US TO UNDERTAKE TO ARRANGE THESE APPOINTMENTS FOR CONG. DRINAN IN HIS CAPACITY AS U.S. LEGISLATOR. SHE HAS ASKED UK EMBASSY TO DO SAME FOR LORD AVEBURY, WITH ASSUMPTION THAT WE AND BRITISH EMBASSY WOULD BE ABLE TO COORDINATE EFFORTS AND GAIN JOINT APPOINTMENTS SO THAT AI DELEGATION COULD SEE GOA OFFICIALS TOGETHER. MISS FEENEY HERSELF INTENDS TO ACT AS INTERPRETER. SHE SAID THAT IF A REASONABLY FIRM SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS COULD NOT BE WORKED UP THIS WEEK, SHE WOULD RECOMMEND TO AI LONDON THAT VISIT BE CANCELLED.

3. WE HAVE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH BRITISH, AND HAVE AGREED THAT POLITICAL OFFICERS FROM TWO EMBASSIES WILL APPROACH HEAD OF HUMAN
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RIGHTS OFFICE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED IN FONMINISTRY, POINT OUT THAT

MINISTRY IN RECENT CIRCULAR NOTE REQUESTED THAT ALL EMBASSIES COORDINATE HUMAN RIGHTS INQUIRIES THROUGH THAT OFFICE, AND ASK IT TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS (IF INDEED GOA INTENDS TO GRANT ANY). AS OF MORNING NOV 4, FONMINISTRY HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE HAS NOT RESPONDED TO OUR REPEATED REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENT.

4. IN MEANTIME, MISS FEENEY APPARENTLY TRIED TO OBTAIN INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR OF NEWSPAPER LA OPINION, WHICH HAS REPUTATION FOR COURAGE AND OUTSPNKENNESS IN TREATING SUBJECT OF POLICITCAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM FROM BOTH SIDES. IN FRONT PAGE NOTE NOV 4, LA OPINION REPORTED THAT IT HAD CELINED TO RECEIVE AI STAFF MEMBER AND RECOMMENDED THAT SHE DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WITH WIDOW AND ORPHANS (SIC) OF CRYSLER EXECUTIVE (ARGENTINE NATIONAL) ASSASSINATED YESTERDAY BY MONTONEROS (SEE REF B).

5. CONG. DRINAN WILL BE MET NOV 6 AT AIRPORT BY POL COUNSELOR WAYNE SMITH AND EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER AND MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR WILL BE ARRANGED FOR SAME DAY. WE AGREE WITH DEPT THAT FACT THAT CONGRESSMAN IS ALSO PRIEST WILL NOT PRESENT SPECIAL DANGER, BUT VISIT IS RAPIDLY BECOMING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND INTENSITY OF FEELING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM FROM ABROAD COULD QUITE POSSIBLY RESULT IN ADVERSE PRESS PUBLICITY AND PERSONAL CRITICISM DIRECTED AT AI GROUP. AS THIS IS FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT BY INTERNATIONALLY-PROMINENT ORGANIZATION TO POST-COUP ARGENTINA, IT IS VERY LIKELY TO PROVOKE CONTROVERSY.

3. AMBASSADOR INFORMED PAPAL NUNCIO NOV. 4 OF FATHER DRINAN'S ARRIVAL.
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